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Relationship between disarmament and development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/56. It discusses recent trends in the further strengthening within the United Nations of the relationship between disarmament and development. In addition, the report contains information received from Governments on the subject.

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I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 69/56, on the relationship between disarmament and development, the Assembly stressed the central role of the United Nations in the relationship between disarmament and development, and requested the Secretary-General to strengthen further the role of the Organization in this field. In paragraph 2 of the resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to take action, through appropriate organs and within available resources, for the implementation of the action programme adopted in 1987 at the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development.[1]

2. In paragraph 6 of the resolution, the General Assembly reiterated its invitation to Member States to provide the Secretary-General with information regarding measures and efforts to devote part of the resources made available by the implementation of disarmament and arms limitation agreements to economic and social development. In paragraph 7 of the resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its seventieth session on the implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

3. On 25 February 2015, the Secretariat sent a note verbale to Member States seeking their views. At the time of writing, replies had been received from Argentina, Armenia, Cuba, El Salvador, Jamaica, Portugal, Spain and Ukraine. This information is contained in section III below.

II. Strengthening further the role of the United Nations in the disarmament-development relationship

4. The United Nations continues to take action to implement the recommendations contained in key documents in the area of disarmament and development, including the action programme adopted in 1987 at the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, and the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on the relationship between disarmament and development (see A/59/119).

5. In the past decade, the United Nations has increasingly broadened the scope of disarmament and arms regulation efforts to address the social and economic impact of the use of conventional weapons, their proliferation and accumulation, and the illicit trade particularly in small arms. Examples include the work undertaken by the United Nations Mine Action Service, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other United Nations system partners addressing the impact of explosive weapons in populated areas, the capacity-building programmes of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime including on implementation of the Firearms Protocol,[2] and the efforts of UNDP on crisis prevention and recovery.

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[1] See *Report of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, New York, 24 August-11 September 1987* (A/CONF.130/39).

[2] Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

6. The Arms Trade Treaty entered into force on 24 December 2014. The Treaty sets common standards to be observed by States parties in international transfers of conventional arms, ammunition and parts and components. It contains important provisions for international assistance and cooperation including the establishment of a voluntary trust fund which will assist States parties in implementing the Treaty. The United Nations system has supported States parties' efforts to implement the Arms Trade Treaty, including through the work of the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament, and through the management of the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation.

7. In his latest report to the Security Council on the issue of small arms and light weapons (S/2015/289), the Secretary-General underscored the human suffering caused by the misuse, diversion and illicit circulation of arms and ammunition. The report also highlighted government responsibility in regard to proper use of weapons and their safe storage, as well as in developing sound legislation and putting in place adequate procedures to enable the tracing of illicit weapons. Importantly, it examined measures for addressing the illicit circulation of arms and ammunition including through monitoring of arms embargoes, peacekeeping efforts, security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, and the strengthening of the rule of law. In his report, the Secretary-General also urged that specific attention be paid to curbing the illicit flows of ammunition.

8. In their efforts to stem the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, Member States continue to implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. At the second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts, held in New York from 1 to 5 June 2015, States considered that recent developments in small arms and light weapon technologies have the potential to both positively and negatively impact the illicit trade in small arms. While radio-frequency identification and blue-tooth technologies can enhance the security of weapon stockpiles and potentially reduce diversion, the 3D printing of weapons has the potential to increase unlicensed craft weapon production. The issue of transfer of such technologies as part of international cooperation and assistance was a central component of the discussions at the Meeting. Assistance, capacity-building and international cooperation are expected to continue to feature on the agenda of meetings under the Programme of Action, including the Biennial Meeting of States in 2016 and the Third Review Conference in 2018.

9. Armed violence claims the lives of hundreds of thousands of civilians each year, including many women and children. Armed violence has severely hindered efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals. The new framework that will succeed the Millennium Development Goals should strive to explicitly include the prevention and reduction of armed violence and combating illicit arms flows, as these have been shown to have a negative impact on prospects for social and economic development The Office for Disarmament Affairs will continue to support efforts to reduce armed violence, including through its regional centres and the promotion of, and the provision of technical assistance for, the establishment of gun-free zones.[3]

[3] www.un.org/disarmament/publications/more/gfz-guidelines/gfz-guidelines.pdf.

10. The United Nations Report on Military Expenditures, a global transparency mechanism on military expenditures, continues to be of value as it can provide a sound basis for discussions on levels of military spending, underscoring the key principle of the Charter of the United Nations of the "least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources". Since 1981, Member States voluntarily submit an annual report on their military expenditures using an agreed format. This standardized reporting allows for comparison of expenditures across States or years, and offers insights into the details of and trends in national military expenditures. The participation in the instrument remains relatively low, with on average approximately 60 States participating annually in recent years, compared to a period between 2002 and 2008 when on average approximately 80 States reported annually. In 2014 and 2015, the Office for Disarmament Affairs has continued to promote the instrument. This includes sending periodic reminders, and holding meetings and events to promote this reporting mechanism.

11. The United Nations continued to coordinate its activities related to disarmament and arms regulation through various interdepartmental mechanisms, which include in their activities components addressing the social and economic impacts of such weapons through victim assistance, reintegration and rehabilitation, and by promoting employment. These mechanisms include the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms, the United Nations Mine Action Team, and the Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration.

III. Information received from Governments

Argentina

[Original: Spanish]
[15 May 2015]

The Argentine Republic has been undergoing a process of profound change in which special emphasis has been placed on the social dimension, but which is part of an overarching agenda of using the exercise of political power as a fundamental tool for implementing real change, with the active engagement of individuals and organizations.

The country now has a political, social and economic agenda that recognizes all Argentines as persons with full legal (human) rights and offers them the prospect of a life of inclusion and social justice; it is a national people's agenda for increasing production and reducing debt through an active, engaged and dynamic State.

The restoration and expansion of rights, the generation and protection of employment and the development of domestic production are the pillars of this process of change, in which economic policy is inseparable from social policy. Economic growth, together with policy measures for equitable redistribution, have enabled the Argentine State to make progress in strengthening rights for all while seeking to ensure equal opportunity through active policies of social protection and empowerment.

One example of this is the extension of rights through the universalization of the system for the protection of children, adolescents and pregnant women and the

system of pensions for older persons and persons with disabilities, as well as social security portability. Measures are also being taken to provide incentives for consumption in the domestic market as a means of boosting demand in order to generate employment; these are fundamental pillars of the Argentine development model.

Against this backdrop, the Argentine Republic's defence policy is based on a model that combines self-reliance with cooperation: it seeks to achieve sufficient self-defence capacity while at the same time engaging in bilateral and multilateral cooperation with a view to contributing to a regional and, where possible, global environment in which mutual trust and transparency set the stage for enhanced protection of national interests and a climate of freedom, peace and justice, thereby strengthening institutions and international law.

Argentina is a member of various regional integration arrangements, such as the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, and is an active participant in various peacekeeping missions around the world, notably in Haiti, where its armed forces are involved in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. It is a peaceful country with one of the lowest arms expenditure rates in the region — and indeed the world — and a long history of advocating peace and respect for international law.

The Argentine example is therefore not relevant for the purpose of analysing the relationship between reductions or levels of arms expenditure and increases in social investment, particularly over the past decade.

For example, while the Argentine Government allocated a mere 8.6 per cent of its 2015 national budget to defence and security services,[4] it allocated 58.6 per cent to social services.[5]

Armenia

[Original: English]
[13 April 2015]

The persistence of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the threat of resumption of large-scale hostilities by Azerbaijan do not give the Republic of Armenia much latitude to embark on disarmament activities. Moreover, Azerbaijan is in stark violation of the legally binding Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and significantly exceeds the established maximum levels of holdings for the Treaty-Limited Equipment. The disproportionate accumulation of armaments and manifold increase of the military budget by Azerbaijan in recent years inevitably drives the arms race at the regional level. This prevents Armenia for the time being from engaging in earnest in disarmament.

Nevertheless, even in this complex security situation, Armenia manages to carry out disarmament activities and allocates resources generated therefrom to humanitarian, economic and social development purposes.

[4] Defence and security services include national defence, internal security, prison services and intelligence services.

[5] Social services include drinking water and sewer systems, education and culture, housing and urban development, science and technology, and social advocacy and assistance.

The first disarmament activity was carried out in 2007, when the rocket fuel Melange stockpiled in the vicinity of the Armenian town of Spitak was transformed into fertilizer. The project was implemented in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and a number of donor countries contributed. The recycling plant created several dozens of jobs, though temporary, in the local economy, and the fertilizers produced were distributed among farmers for a symbolic price.

On Armenia's initiative a trust fund project with NATO will be established. The assessment and project proposal stage has already been completed but implementation is pending, due to the lack of financing. One of the components of the fund is demining. Assistance will be offered to the Armenian side for demining capacity-building. The project will significantly broaden the mine clearance activities in Armenia that are already under way. As a result, large swaths of countryside will return to agricultural cultivation and improve the economic outlook in border regions of the country.

The Republic of Armenia remains a staunch supporter of disarmament and stands ready to properly engage once the security environment allows.

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[26 May 2015]

Global military expenditure reached the staggering figure of $1.75 trillion, or 2.4 per cent of global gross domestic product, in 2013, while 805 million people experienced chronic hunger between 2012 and 2014.

The exorbitant amounts currently spent on weapons should be used instead to promote peace, economic and social development and a life of dignity for all human beings. The resources currently dedicated to armaments could be used, for example, to help countries reach the ostensibly unattainable Millennium Development Goals.

The very survival of humanity is continually threatened by the existence of more than 16,000 nuclear weapons.

For the cost of a single nuclear weapon, medical care could be provided to 36,000 people. Cuba reiterates its support for the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. The resources now being used to build up nuclear arsenals should be used instead for the benefit of humanity and the eradication of poverty.

The first International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons was celebrated on 26 September 2014.

Cuba welcomes the broad international support for that initiative. In the words of the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz: "In a nuclear war, the collateral damage would be the life of humanity ... Every Government in the world has the obligation to respect the right to life of every nation ... Peoples must demand their right to live from their political leaders ... Nobody can afford to be indifferent or to lose a moment in demanding respect for that right. Tomorrow it will be too late."

Resources released through disarmament measures should be devoted to development, particularly in the least developed countries, as established in the Declaration on the Right to Development, adopted by the General Assembly in 1986.

Cuba reiterates its proposal that half of current military expenditure be allocated to an international United Nations-managed fund established for that purpose. Such a fund should be in a position to ensure sustainable socioeconomic development and help countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The United Nations should play a central role in highlighting the interrelationship between disarmament and development, primarily in the implementation of the action programme adopted at the 1987 International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development.

The action programme envisages the adoption of measures to reduce the level and magnitude of military expenditures and reallocate those resources for social and economic development in the developing countries, and to review issues related to the conversion of military industry to civilian production.

The Government and people of Cuba are firmly committed to the implementation of the action programme. The country's Revolutionary Armed Forces have placed their military resources and capabilities at the service of Cuba's economic and social development whenever necessary, including military units and camps, military transportation and aircraft, engineering resources, medical services and other logistical resources. Relevant examples include the relocation of the "Granma" Naval Academy so that its former premises could accommodate the Latin American School of Medicine, which is now being used to provide free training for young people from over 100 countries, most of whom are from low-income families, to become doctors; the provision of military personnel and fumigation equipment for the campaign to eradicate disease vectors; the support provided for food production; and the services offered by military construction companies for the building of schools, canals, reservoirs, roads and natural disaster evacuation routes.

A naval base is located on a part of Cuban territory that is illegally occupied by the United States of America. The Guantánamo military base must be closed immediately and the territory returned to its rightful owner, the Cuban people, so that it may be used for the implementation of economic and social development projects.

Cuba reiterates that the international community should take practical steps to ensure that the resources now being used for military purposes are reallocated to development activities.

El Salvador

[Original: Spanish]
[12 May 2015]

With regard to the obligations which El Salvador has undertaken through the United Nations and the Organization of American States in relation to measures to support economic and social development through disarmament and arms limitation efforts, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/56 on the relationship between disarmament and development, the Salvadoran Government's five-year

plan allocates a large portion of the national budget to productive employment, education, health and security. As there has been no direct increase in the defence budget of the Salvadoran armed forces in recent years, their acquisition of weapons is limited.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Defence, in coordination with other ministries, has organized campaigns to provide goods in exchange for weapons, with the objective of maintaining stability and encouraging sustainable economic and social development.

Jamaica

[Original: English]
[5 May 2015]

The Government of Jamaica has implemented a Small Arms Control Policy, which seeks to institute proper stockpile management practices/policies in an effort to reduce the number of illegal firearms in Jamaica. As part of the overarching Small Arms Control Strategy, Jamaica has been involved in the following activities, which are in keeping with the United Nations broad definition of practical disarmament measures:

(a) Destruction of firearms and ammunition in order to prevent diversion of the same into the illicit arms trade, which could exacerbate the current homicide rate. As a result, as at 31 March 2015, the Government of Jamaica has destroyed 840 obsolete/unserviceable/recovered firearms and 64,172 rounds of expired ammunition that were in the custody of the security forces. This project is ongoing.

(b) Implementation of a national marking project seeking to bring Jamaica into compliance with international obligations, as well as to improve the traceability of small arms passing through Jamaica's borders for use by the security forces (State-owned) and private citizens. As a result, as at 31 March 2015, 1,684 State-owned firearms and 478 privately-owned firearms have been marked. This project will continue until all State-owned and privately-owned firearms are marked.

(c) Amendments to the Firearms Act in order for Jamaica to honour its international obligations, as well as to address existing deficiencies within the current legislation that hinder the Firearm Licensing Authority and members of the security forces in the execution of their duties, that is, the enforcement of the Firearms Act. The primary intention of amending the Act is to assist in the reduction of violent crimes, the dismantling of organized criminal networks and the restoration of peace and public order by reducing the availability of illegal firearms in Jamaica. The amendments being contemplated will also consider the introduction of new services and categories of permits, certificates and licences, as well as different categories of firearm experts/practitioners such as trainers, range operators and the like, which require the introduction of new fees.

(d) Jamaica signed and ratified the Arms Trade Treaty in June 2013 and June 2014 respectively. Ratification of the Treaty signals Jamaica's contribution to the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons. This activity will also serve to mitigate potential security threats which may result from diversion of such items being transited/trans-shipped through Jamaican territory.

(e) Commencement of a specialized firearm awareness training programme for law enforcement officials operating at Jamaica's ports of entry, in order to sensitize such officers to the different component parts of the firearms reportedly being smuggled into Jamaica. Several of these component parts can be used to modify the physical characteristics, functionality and ballistic identity of the firearm, which can be present a significant challenge to law enforcement.

Portugal

[Original: English]
[4 May 2015]

International instruments

Portugal is a party to all relevant disarmament conventions, such as the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Ottawa Convention) and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which establish the obligation of States parties to destroy their existing stockpile of landmines and cluster munitions, but also to conduct clearance activities in mined areas under their jurisdiction. In fact, the aforementioned weapons gravely hinder the economic and social development of affected communities by preventing access to farmland and pastures, as well as other vital resources. The humanitarian consequences of these kinds of weapons must be pointed out and should be regarded as an essential element in the universalization efforts of both instruments.

We are also a party to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. We follow with concern the development of lethal autonomous weapons and recall the discussions already taking place in the Human Rights Council regarding armed drones.

As one of the coordinators for the universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Portugal fully engaged, in 2012 and 2013, with all United Nations Member States in order to promote this landmark convention, which is still the sole multilateral instrument that aims at putting an end to the civilian suffering and casualties caused by cluster munitions. We have outreached intensely in promoting the Convention.

Portugal regrets that the international community has so far been unable to reach consensus on a protocol regarding mines other than antipersonnel landmines in the context of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Mines other than antipersonnel landmines, by blocking roads and general access to and from certain areas, prevent effective humanitarian action on the ground. Furthermore, such mines may lead to the isolation of the population, hampering the development of State infrastructures in the affected region and thus undermining State authority and hindering development.

Recently, on a multinational level, Portugal participated in the Open Working Group for the negotiation of the development objectives in the post-2015 development agenda, struggling for the inclusion of a specific objective on matters of peace and security. In this context Portugal has seen with great satisfaction the inclusion of Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable

development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Assistance

In 2012, Portugal continued its cooperation with Mozambique regarding landmine clearance and disposal, namely by granting access to maps and relevant cartography, of which copies were made available to the authorities of Mozambique.

In this context, a delegation from the Mozambique National Demining Institute visited the Archives of the Portuguese Ministry of National Defence, as well as the Tropical Research Institute, a public research and development institution which holds a vast cartographic archive (Overseas Historical Archive).

In June 2014, Portugal participated in the Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention that was held in Maputo, and had the honour to be a Friend of the Presidency. In this quality, Portugal was requested to make some contribution and has sent some materials in the area of logistic support (informatics).

Furthermore, in the past, Portugal has also provided technical assistance in the field of mine detection and clearance, in the framework of IFOR (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and KFOR (Kosovo) and training in demining activities in Guinea-Bissau.

Portugal is also involved in the mine action project in Libya with its five plus five defence initiative partners.

Portugal can provide assistance upon request, depending on the availability of adequate funding. The Portuguese armed forces experts are qualified in mine detection and clearance. The equipment used in mine detection and clearance includes electronic search means, improvised explosive device/explosive ordnance disposal operator suits and X-ray (real time), dearmer devices, mechanical devices, hand-held metal detectors and multi-sensor systems.

Portugal signed a country programme framework with the International Atomic Energy Agency in which cooperation with Portuguese-speaking countries is included as a development cooperation measure regarding non-proliferation and disarmament.

In different occasions, Portugal has raised in bilateral contacts the issue of disarmament as an element that should be taken into account in development strategies.

National implementation

Portugal adopted, in 2009, the National Strategy for Security and Development. This Strategy focuses on coherence and efficiency, and ensures better coordination of all Portuguese programmes. The Strategy also promotes a broader approach and reinforces the priority of human security as a major goal in the Portuguese cooperation policy.

Spain

[Original: Spanish]
[30 April 2015]

Spain has reaffirmed its commitment to disarmament and development by adopting legislative and operational measures and promoting active disarmament and development policies in other parts of the world.

Spain has one of the world's most advanced pieces of legislation in the field of disarmament, which exceeds the requirements set out in the international treaties and commitments by which Spain is bound. It is also making a considerable effort to contain its military expenditures, which represent about 0.53 per cent of gross domestic product in the current year.

At the international level, Spain is contributing to the effort to address development issues in relation to the adoption of disarmament measures by supporting the adoption of United Nations resolutions urging all States to adopt such measures.

The election of Spain as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and of the Committees established pursuant to resolutions 1718 (2006) and 1737 (2006) reflects its image as a trustworthy and responsible country with human resources capable of taking on those responsibilities.

Spain complies strictly with the Ottawa Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. It has retained 1,660 anti-personnel mines, 306 mortar rounds and 9 aerial bombs for purposes of experimentation in demining materials and techniques.

The International Demining Centre has held 46 courses on humanitarian demining, which were attended by more than 1,000 demining personnel and instructors from 18 countries.

In 2014 the Centre delivered a course on demining instruction for the Organization of American States (OAS), and in 2015 it held a demining course for 13 OAS experts.

Spain also hosts a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-accredited centre of excellence on countering improvised explosive devices. The Centre serves as a source of expertise in the context of NATO efforts to counter such devices.

Spanish regulations to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons are more stringent than those envisaged in the United Nations Programme of Action on this issue.

Lastly, Spain devotes significant military resources, both human and technical, to the conduct of disarmament, peacekeeping and assistance missions throughout the world.

Ukraine

[Original: Russian]
[2 June 2015]

In order to make optimum use of available resources and further address the issue of poverty, and in accordance with the implementation plan for the Association Agreement between the European Union and Ukraine, approved by an administrative order of the Government of Ukraine, a poverty elimination strategy identifying avenues and tools for reducing and preventing poverty will be developed in 2015.

The proposals developed will be based on the international obligations undertaken by Ukraine in the social sphere, international approaches to tackling poverty and social exclusion, best practices for developing and implementing strategic interventions to address the problems of poverty, and the results of the implementation of the State targeted social programme for overcoming poverty for the period up to 2015.

Under the 2014 State Budget Act, 50 per cent of the resources derived from the disposal during the current year of surplus weapons and military and specialized equipment belonging to the armed forces is allocated to the general fund of the State budget, while the other 50 per cent is allocated to the special fund of the Ministry of Defence to address social issues, in accordance with the comprehensive State programme to provide housing for members of the armed forces of Ukraine and their families.

In 2014, the special fund of the Ministry of Defence to finance the construction or purchase of housing for members of the armed forces received in excess of 27.5 million hryvnias (more than $1.2 million) through the disposal of surplus weapons and military and specialized equipment of the armed forces.